

1 DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
2 PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING

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5 CHAMPLAIN HUDSON POWER EXPRESS, INC.
6 TRANSMISSION LINE PROPOSAL

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9 Taken at the Plattsburgh-North-Country Chamber
10 of Commerce, 7061 State Route 9, Plattsburgh, New
11 York, on July 16, 2010, commencing at 8:15 p.m.

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14 BEFORE: JERRY PELL, PhD, CCM, U.S. Department of
15 Energy, 1000 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC
16 20585

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 (8:15 p.m.)

3 DR. PELL: Let's go to the formal part of
4 the meeting, and we'll now start the process of taking
5 formal record.

6 We'll start the formal portion of the
7 meeting at this point. And I will start by
8 introducing myself. I'm Jerry Pell. I'm an
9 environmental scientist with the Department of Energy
10 in Washington, D.C.

11 I've been doing this for 34 years with DOE.
12 I've been working on energy and environment for 40
13 years, ever since I finished my doctorate.

14 And I'm going to start off by telling you a
15 personal human interest story.

16 Both my wife and I are from Montreal. And
17 when I grew up as a kid, Plattsburgh was the place to
18 go on weekends for the beach.

19 And all my toys came from Plattsburgh. I
20 had a -- some of you who may be old enough to
21 remember, there was a Montgomery Ward at the time that
22 was at the end of Margaret Street. And as you were

1 coming into the city, I remember specifically it was
2 on the left-hand side.

3 I had my dad buy me a Hallicrafters
4 shortwave radio out of the basement of Montgomery
5 Ward. And after that, of course, as we got older, you
6 came to Plattsburgh for the drive-in movies because
7 the Province of Québec would not permit drive-in
8 movies.

9 So here I am now, 68 years of age, 34 years
10 into my career with the Department of Energy, on the
11 verge of thinking about retirement, back in
12 Plattsburgh. It's a very emotional experience for me.
13 And I'm delighted to be here. It's like a homecoming
14 in its own right.

15 So it's really great to be back in town,
16 folks. It brings back a lot of memories.

17 I'm glad to see that the -- the paper mill,
18 paper company, Georgia-Pacific -- didn't that used to
19 be a match company at one point, historically?

20 UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: Separate
21 complex.

22 DR. PELL: Separate complex. Okay.

1 UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: Still a paper
2 mill, but --

3 UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: J.C. Penney.

4 DR. PELL: J.C. Penney. Well, Montgomery
5 Ward is gone, too, for that matter.

6 UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: But we got
7 their property.

8 UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: After they
9 dumped chemicals in our lake.

10 DR. PELL: Maybe I shouldn't have brought up
11 the subject.

12 UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: No. I'm
13 talking about the woods.

14 DR. PELL: Anyway, it's great to be here.
15 I'm glad to see you here. I'm going to let Don
16 introduce himself, Don Jessome, the president and
17 chief executive officer of the company, for the record
18 to tell us about the Champlain Hudson Project, and
19 then we'll start taking the comments.

20 MR. JESSOME: Thank you Dr. Pell. It's a
21 pleasure to be back here. I was -- I had the pleasure
22 of having a public meeting here back in -- I think it

1 was in April of this year.

2 My name is Don Jessome. I am the president
3 and CEO of Transmission Developers, Inc., and I'm here
4 to give you a little bit of a description of the
5 project that we're proposing, called the Champlain
6 Hudson Power Express.

7 It's a 1,000-megawatt project. And I just
8 want to let this audience know the project originally
9 was a 2,000-megawatt project. So we were actually
10 looking at two cables going into New York City and two
11 over in southwest Connecticut. That was the original
12 concept of the project.

13 On July the 6th, we made a public
14 announcement that we are no longer proceeding with the
15 Connecticut portion of the project. So it's only a
16 1,000-megawatt project now, two cables going into New
17 York City.

18 So it's a HVDC project, or a high-voltage,
19 direct current project. And high-voltage, direct
20 current just means that as opposed to the AC current
21 and power that we all use in our home, this is --
22 instead of a sinusoidal wave, or a wave that goes like

1 this, it's actually a constant voltage, and no wave
2 form to it.

3 And the nice part of that technology is the
4 fact that you can run in cable format for very long
5 distances very efficiently.

6 As we all know, AC overhead is run very,
7 very long distances. And it's a very efficient
8 technology. It's made our lives all very easy, to be
9 honest.

10 DC is a technology that is very
11 complementary to AC, but its real claim to fame is
12 that you can put it in cable format and you can run it
13 long distances.

14 The reason we chose the technology is very
15 specific. We chose the technology not because it's
16 less expensive than overhead transmission -- far from
17 it; it's much more expensive.

18 The reason we chose the technology is
19 because we can bury it. It's important to us that the
20 communities that we go through, we can bury the
21 transmission line, and it's not going to be a visual
22 impact to the community. And that's why we chose that

1 technology.

2 The other thing that's important to know
3 about this project is who's going to pay for it. And
4 this project is what's called a merchant transmission
5 project.

6 A merchant transmission project just means
7 that the people who will actually ship the electricity
8 on the line will be the ones who pay for it.

9 We do not own the electricity. We don't
10 sell the electricity. We don't buy the electricity.

11 We're like a -- I like to describe ourselves
12 as the freight truck that takes from the manufacturing
13 facility to the retail store.

14 We don't take ownership of those products in
15 between. We simply have a service that allows others
16 to sell their electricity into the marketplace.

17 We're currently talking to multiple
18 suppliers who would look at taking service on our
19 line. And those are primarily Canadian -- well, they
20 are. At this point in time, they're Canadian
21 suppliers who are hydro and wind supply.

22 Unfortunately, at this point in time, due to

1 confidentiality, I can't disclose who they are. But
2 that will become very public in the very near future.

3 One of the questions I get asked on occasion
4 is: What happens when you bury those cables if an
5 anchor hits the cable? You know, do we fry all the
6 fish? Does anything, you know, disastrous happen?

7 And, you know, the very simple answer is:
8 No, they do not. The technology that's on either end
9 of this transmission line, these converter stations
10 and the equipment to actually control the flow of
11 power, act in super, very, very high speed --
12 microseconds -- to kill the power if anything happens
13 to the cable itself.

14 The cable is buried. And the reason it's
15 buried is so that we don't have any of these issues.
16 And that's why you bury cables. It's just to avoid
17 having anchors or draggers or other equipment
18 interfere with the cable.

19 The actual -- the construction period that
20 we're looking at is starting in the fall of next year,
21 2011. And it will take about three years for this
22 project to be fully constructed. So it will go into

1 service around early 2015.

2 It's a delight -- it's a delight to be back
3 here again. And with that, I will pass it back to Dr.
4 Pell.

5 DR. PELL: Thank you, Don. The first person
6 -- let me just ask: Are there any elected officials
7 here that would like to identify themselves and that
8 would like to speak?

9 Are there any state, local, or federal
10 officials here from the government that would like to
11 speak and identify themselves?

12 Since there aren't any, we will start with
13 Mr. James Tyler Frakes, who is the first person to
14 have submitted his name to present comments with us
15 tonight.

16 And Mr. Frakes is with the Adirondack
17 Council.

18 MR. FRAKES: I work for an environmental
19 nonprofit helping to protect ecological integrity and
20 welfare to the Adirondack Park. If you're not
21 familiar with it, 6 million acres right down the road.
22 Lake Champlain is part of it.

1 I think just our main concern is aquatic
2 wildlife and what impacts that are going to be on it.

3 And I've read the scoping documents. They
4 do a very good job. And we look forward to reviewing
5 an EIS.

6 I mean, basically, our concern's with
7 benthic organisms. Lake Champlain, you play at the
8 beach. You know, there are mollusks.

9 I mean, we're worried about substrate, how
10 long that's going to be in the water column, what
11 effects that it's going to have on those organisms.

12 The concrete blankets that you're going to -
13 - that the company is going to be placing over the
14 cables and in the portions where they cannot be
15 buried, what effects is that going to have on the --
16 the environment afterwards? Is that going to be
17 receptive for species to come back in?

18 And basically, I don't really understand why
19 the company is choosing to -- to put it in a body of
20 water that portions are 400 feet deep when there are -
21 - is a railroad running all the way down to New York
22 City. There is a highway running all the way down to

1 New York City. Why can't the right-of-way be used?

2 And I think that's about it. And I thank
3 you for giving me the opportunity to voice my opinion.
4 Thank you.

5 DR. PELL: Thank you, Mr. Frakes. The
6 question of running along the railway or the highway
7 has been raised by others before tonight. And one
8 thing we do look at in the EIS is alternatives.

9 I want to proceed now to Mr. David -- it
10 looks like Maxwell. Is that correct?

11 MR. MANWELL: Manwell.

12 DR. PELL: David, I've got to tell you,
13 looking at your form, you checked that you want a copy
14 of the EIS. I could not begin to figure out your
15 address the way this was written.

16 MR. MANWELL: Oh.

17 DR. PELL: So if you get a chance and want
18 to write a new one that we might actually be able to
19 read, that would be great.

20 If you could spell your last name for the
21 stenographer, please.

22 MR. MANWELL: M-a-n-w-e-l-l.

1 DR. PELL: Thank you very much.

2 MR. MANWELL: My concern is it -- you --
3 many people have claimed -- have voiced concern that
4 the North Country won't get anything out of the -- the
5 power line. But at present, I've spoken with people
6 from Noble and asked them why many of the --

7 DR. PELL: You've spoken with people from
8 where?

9 MR. MANWELL: Noble Environmental Power, the
10 developer of our wind power in the --

11 DR. PELL: Oh, okay. Okay.

12 MR. MANWELL: -- northwestern and eastern
13 Franklin County.

14 Many of -- there are many times when some of
15 their turbines are idle but there's plenty of wind.
16 You can see that the -- the trees are blowing well and
17 the grass is blowing around.

18 And I've asked them why that is. And they
19 said it's because NYISO directs them to do that
20 because there isn't enough capacity in the power lines
21 to ship out the power.

22 If they can ship out their power on -- on

1 something like this, then that will benefit the North
2 Country. Granted, if it helps Yonkers or someplace
3 get cheaper power, that's fine. They're paying for
4 it, paying us for it.

5 And the North Country is not a rich place.
6 It's a rather depressed economy. We will benefit from
7 it. That's my point.

8 DR. PELL: Thank you very much, David. I
9 appreciate that.

10 The third person who registered to speak is
11 Peter Delia (phonetic), is it?

12 MR. DELIA: Yes. But I got my questions
13 asked during the informal session.

14 DR. PELL: Okay.

15 MR. DELIA: And I thank those gentlemen.

16 DR. PELL: Great. Thank you, Peter. That
17 completes the list. Now it's open to anyone that
18 would like to make comments. It's open mic.

19 So if you need to -- if you want to address
20 us, just please raise your hand, come on up, tell us
21 who you are, and use the mic.

22 We're all friends here. There we go. I

1 knew somebody would rise to the occasion.

2 MS. FISHER: Hi. I'm Lori Fisher. I'm
3 director of the Lake Champlain Committee. And we are
4 a bi-state organization. And we're dedicated to Lake
5 Champlain's water quality and ensuring it's an
6 accessible lake, as well.

7 DR. PELL: How do you spell your last name,
8 please?

9 MS. FISHER: Fisher, F-i-s-h-e-r. I filled
10 out a card.

11 DR. PELL: Okay.

12 MS. FISHER: And I'm on the mailing list and
13 been here before.

14 So we're concerned about any recreational
15 impacts, the mapping route for cultural resources,
16 recreational impacts, as well as water quality impacts
17 and share the concern about benefit to communities and
18 the re-suspension, how that's going to effect things,
19 as well as have that larger question of: Is this the
20 best route for this to take and the one where
21 particularly the environmental impacts would be best
22 mitigated?

1 And we also have concerns about the
2 electromagnetic fields. I know that's a part of your
3 investigations.

4 But we'd be looking at that, and the heat
5 issue, in terms of, you know, the impacts to aquatic
6 species. So we look forward to the EIS. Thank you.

7 DR. PELL: Thank you very much. Who else
8 would like to submit some comments for the record?
9 Nobody? Last chance.

10 MR. DELIA: Could I help out with the
11 electromagnetic field?

12 DR. PELL: Sure.

13 MR. DELIA: Okay.

14 DR. PELL: You have to come to the mic,
15 though, because we're on the record and I need the
16 stenographer to be able to hear you.

17 MR. DELIA: I'm 75, so you've got to give me
18 more time.

19 DR. PELL: I'm catching up to you. I'm 68.
20 That's not that far behind.

21 MR. DELIA: Wait until you get to 75.

22 DR. PELL: All right. I'll -- I'll keep

1 that in mind.

2 Let's get your name first, again.

3 MR. DELIA: Peter Delia.

4 To answer your question with DC, there is no
5 electromagnetic field, not unless you wrap it around a
6 piece of iron bar and shake it.

7 DR. PELL: Well, you get an electric field.

8 MR. DELIA: There's no radiation.

9 DR. PELL: There's no magnetic field.

10 MR. DELIA: The electromagnetic field is
11 just power, but I think first radiated electricity,
12 something leaving the wire.

13 DR. PELL: Okay. Thank you, Peter. I
14 appreciate it.

15 MR. DELIA: You're welcome, sir.

16 DR. PELL: Anybody else?

17 HDR TEAM MEMBER: We just had someone come
18 in.

19 DR. PELL: Okay. Would that gentleman be
20 interested in speaking for the record?

21 MR. HILLS: Have you had questions going all
22 along?

1 Okay. I'm Jack Hills. I'm a U.S. Air Force
2 retired captain development engineer.

3 DR. PELL: Is that H-i-l-l-s?

4 MR. HILLS: H-i-l-l-s, yes.

5 DR. PELL: Thank you.

6 MR. HILLS: About a year and a half, two
7 years ago, I started tracking running power by land
8 from here around the mountains, through Utica, and on
9 down to Albany, and then down to New York City.

10 Lot of approval conflicts because of the way
11 the state constitution is written.

12 And I've found that the environmental
13 studies that various companies did went no further
14 than the local community that they were in. They were
15 never integrated, no big picture. No one had a total
16 view of what impact the long -- the big picture was
17 going to have.

18 This, to me -- since I heard that Canada was
19 looking for a quick solution to getting power to New
20 York City, that's well and good, but my concern was:
21 What does it do for communities along the way?

22 There are reasons for tapping into power for

1 the communities that are going to benefit the future.

2 Have you been looking at those aspects?

3 Like, for instance, what power is needed to
4 power something like a modern car, an electrical car?
5 The Volt electric car.

6 Is this going to benefit the North Country
7 so that we can have power upgrades, benefit the home,
8 the average individual, so that they can be up-to-date
9 in technology, or is it just a path to New York City
10 directly?

11 That was my concern initially. And I think
12 it's a big -- a great choice to have this option.

13 And it is a federal environmental study,
14 right?

15 DR. PELL: That is correct.

16 MR. HILLS: Okay. That's going to integrate
17 it. And that, to me, is a great feature about
18 something like this.

19 That's what I was used to doing as a
20 development engineer, was integrating things from the
21 big picture to get a project going.

22 It's complicated, but to me it seems like

1 this would simplify a lot of the problems of power
2 distribution, as long as it's not just a straight
3 shoot to benefit New York City, which is what a lot of
4 distribution around the East Coast is. It all funnels
5 into New York City.

6 But it also goes past New York City and taps
7 into Philadelphia. And then we -- we can go west,
8 which is what the President's been wanting to do. And
9 it seems to me it could feature that integration.

10 And I think the mayor has done a great job
11 to work on future applications and move things along.
12 It seems to me this would move things along quite
13 well, make it a lot easier to look at our country's
14 needs, not just necessarily community needs.

15 That's basically why I wanted to get here. I
16 had other obligations, figured you had a handout that
17 I could look at, a plan.

18 And that's basically two questions: Will it
19 benefit the community? And will it benefit our
20 nation's goal of integrating East Coast power into a
21 unified way that helps the rest of us in the country?

22 I was raised in the Midwest, and that's --

1 even in the Midwest, we feed power back here to New
2 York City. So it seems that that complicates the
3 problem to folks in New York City.

4 DR. PELL: Thank you very much for those
5 comments.

6 Don Jessome is with us this evening. He's
7 the head of the Transmission Developers, Incorporated,
8 company who wants to build the project. And I'm sure
9 that he would be glad to chat with you after we
10 adjourn the meeting. You may want to ask these
11 questions of Mr. Jessome.

12 MR. HILLS: Okay. Thank you.

13 DR. PELL: By the way, just as a matter of
14 national policy, as you know, the Department of Energy
15 is very interested in the national grid and in
16 modernizing it.

17 And we like to think that the best way to
18 contemplate the national grid is regionally or
19 nationally rather than locally, because what happens
20 so often is that the source of the power where it's
21 available and the people that need it, where they
22 happen to be living, are far apart. And connecting

1 the two together becomes a major -- a major issue.

2 Is there anybody else that would like to
3 speak. No one?

4 Well, let me -- let me, first of all, before
5 we adjourn, I want to thank the HDR team. We've had,
6 as I mentioned, seven of these. It's been a long week
7 and a half. And I want to thank them for their
8 support.

9 And I want to thank them in advance for the
10 work they're going to be doing on the environmental
11 impact statement.

12 I didn't mention this before only because I
13 didn't think of it. We are going to be preparing a
14 scoping report, which will summarize the comments that
15 were received during these seven meetings.

16 And, also, the comment period is open until
17 August the 2nd. And if you would like to get
18 something in to us electronically or by regular paper
19 mail or through the Internet website, we'd certainly -
20 - certainly be glad to hear from you. All comments
21 are considered the same, regardless of how we receive
22 them. And, so, you do have some time yet to get some

1 thoughts in to us.

2 And once the August 2nd date has passed,
3 we'll be putting together a scoping report that
4 summarizes everything that came in. That will be a
5 public document. It will be on the website, and you
6 will get to see what we heard at each of the seven
7 meetings.

8 All these seven meetings are being
9 transcribed. All the transcripts will be on the
10 record.

11 So, again, great being here. Thank you for
12 coming here. And have a wonderful weekend. And we're
13 going to hang around a little if you want to talk to
14 us in person after we adjourn.

15 So thanks again. Have a good night.

16 (Meeting adjourned at 8:38 p.m.)

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